

derelictus (allied to the *S. brunnipes* of Sturm, and captured by Mr. F. Smith in the vicinity of London).

Perhaps the main defect in Mr. Dawson's volume may be said to be the paucity of the *habitats* which he records,—a circumstance the more to be regretted from the facility with which an extensive series of localities might have been made known; whilst it is a universally admitted fact, that nothing tends so much to increase the general interest in a subject like that which he has so skilfully handled, as a copious and well-selected list of the various districts in which the several insects have been ascertained to occur. It is by this means indeed alone that we can obtain a correct estimate of their topographical distribution, and so be enabled to compare the productiveness of distant portions of the British Isles; whilst the pleasure which it naturally affords to labourers in the same field, to see the fruit of their investigations brought together for the general good, would amply repay the small additional trouble which such an arrangement would have involved.

These however, desirable though they may be, are subsidiary points. The general accuracy of Mr. Dawson's monograph, and the amount of judgment which he has shown in grasping his specific differences, will sufficiently attest its merit; and we can only add that, if his example should induce others to clear up the intricacies of equally difficult departments with as much success, our coleopterous fauna will not be long in assuming a more definite shape than it has hitherto done.

The Medals of Creation, &c. By (the late) G. A. MANTELL, F.R.S.
2 vols. small 8vo. Second Edition. London: Bohn.

It is with somewhat melancholy pleasure that we notice these volumes, as they remind us of one, now passed away, who both by his writings and lectures certainly assisted in rendering the science of geology popular among the many, and whose poetic temperament enlivened the society of private friendship. Previous to the appearance of this work, Parkinson's 'Introduction to the Study of Organic Remains' was, we believe, the only one especially devoted to the subject; and that simply professed to give a mere outline of the principal generic forms, then known, which were found in a fossil state. With the advanced state of science a more compendious work was required—avoiding at the same time mere technicalities and dry details, and yet giving the facts connected with a general view of fossil botany and zoology in such clear and readable manner, as to render the work a popular introduction to the study of palæontology. To a considerable extent, this attempt has been successful; and we should feel the more grateful for the success, when it is considered that the work was the production of leisure hours extracted amidst the onerous duties of a laborious profession.

Regardless of the censure too frequently attached to the medical man who studies Nature, although best qualified to interrogate her, Dr. Mantell fearlessly followed the pursuit, and not only derived thence a

solace, but enlarged our knowledge of the evidence of Creative power and design in the ancient physical revolutions of our globe, the history of which is fraught with so much interest and replete with so much instruction. Ten years have elapsed since the publication of the first edition of the "Medals," which, it is not too much to say, materially assisted the inquirer and student; and many a person who enjoyed the living representative, little thought until reading this work that there was a lesson to be learnt from the worn cockle and oyster shell or broken lobster's claw.

So great has been the advance and so numerous the cultivators of palæontological science of late years, that a new edition was requisite for the student; the present one has been entirely rewritten and arranged, and the first volume was nearly printed at the period of the late author's decease. Fortunately for the public, and certainly for the publisher, the second volume has been issued from under the mantle of the able Secretary of the Geological Society, Mr. T. Rupert Jones, and which, containing as it does the higher branches of the animal kingdom, required much care in the collating and correcting. Moreover, we are glad to find that the editor has avoided the insertion of passages that might be attributed either to egotism or envy in the late author; for it is lamentable that the jostlings of scientific men, when sometimes engaged upon the same bone, should be continued in perpetual raspings.

The volumes contain more than 900 pages and are profusely illustrated; and the subjects are arranged in consecutive order. The work is divided into four parts: the first part contains the nature and arrangement of the British strata, with remarks on the contained fossils and their mode of occurrence as regards petrification, silicification, &c., with hints for collecting and preserving different fossils, more especially the vertebrate forms. The second part is devoted to fossil botany, and is considerably enlarged and improved, giving a general history of the structure and affinities of the mineralized remains of the vegetable kingdom, as well as interesting deductions respecting the successive floras. The third part comprises fossil zoology, and occupies thirteen chapters, treating successively of the Zoophytes, Echinodermata, Foraminifera, Testacea, Cephalopoda, Articulata, Fishes, Reptiles, Birds, and Mammalia. The geological distribution of each group is given, as well as the principal British localities from whence their remains have been obtained.

At p. 217 of the first volume we find the Bryozoa arranged under the Zoophytes, contrary to the present received opinion that they ought to be classed near the Mollusca, although it is fairly stated at p. 265 that they are of a much higher order of organization than the Anthozoa. By some inadvertence at p. 430 the genus *Sphærulites* is arranged with the univalve Mollusca, instead of among the Bivalves and near the Chamidæ, to which the recent researches of Mr. Woodward have proved its affinity. In the second volume (from the Cephalopoda to Mammalia) the editor has used every endeavour to render this portion as complete as possible by citing the latest information, and has also freely inserted many useful and good references

to the different sections treated of, especially among the reptiles and mammals. The subject of foot-prints is copiously treated, and with regard to the controversy respecting the origin of the so-called Ornithodichnites, the editor has judiciously avoided referring them positively to birds. In the section treating of the Batrachia is the following interesting paragraph (p. 748) respecting the geological distribution of certain genera allied to the Perennibranchiata :—"The Labyrinthodont reptiles have been regarded as characteristic of the Permian and Triassic epochs, their remains being found in Germany and England in rocks of that age. The commencement of the existence of this family of sauroid-batrachians, however, is of great antiquity, since their relics also occur in the formations of the Carboniferous epoch. The *Archegosaurus*, a batrachian but slightly removed from the true Labyrinthodont type, has left its well-characterized remains in the coal of Germany; the *Parabatrachus*, in that of Scotland; and the allied *Dendroperpeton*, in the Nova Scotian coal-field. This last-mentioned great carboniferous formation has, however, afforded fossil evidence of the existence of the true Labyrinthodonts in the coal-period; for some cranial bones, imbedded in a mass of Pictou coal, lately sent to England by Mr. J. W. Dawson, and the subject of a paper by Prof. Owen, read before the Geological Society, were demonstrated by that distinguished palæontologist to have close affinity with the corresponding parts of the skull of the Triassic genera *Capitosaurus* and *Metopias*."

The fourth part contains general instructions for the collection of rocks and fossils, and notes of excursions, in illustration of the mode of investigating geological phenomena.

In recommending these volumes to the general reader, we feel assured that the editor has efficiently laboured in rendering his portion of the work as complete a compendium as possible of the palæontological history of the organic beings of which it treats, and in adapting it to the requirements of the geological student of the present time.

Genera Plantarum Floræ Germanicæ iconibus et descriptionibus illustrata. Fasc. 27. Auctore R. CASPARY.

We are glad to announce the receipt of this part of the valuable series of plates commenced many years since by the lamented T. F. L. Nees von Esenbeck, and continued by several eminent botanists. So long an interval had elapsed since the publication of Fasc. 25, which contains the illustrations of twenty genera of Dipsacæ, Stelate, Gentianacæ, &c., edited by Dr. Schnizlein; and Fasc. 26, consisting of twenty genera of Umbellifere published by Prof. Bischoff, that we had begun to fear that there would be no continuation of the work. Our gratification is therefore the greater to find that it is really to be continued. The recently published part is from the pen and pencil of our correspondent Dr. Robert Caspary, of whose qualifications for such an undertaking we had the opportunity of forming an opinion during his residence in England. We are glad to add,